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CENTRE ADDS LOSS OF SMELL, TASTE TO COVID SYMPTOMS

In a revised protocol, the health ministry also advised against using hydroxychloroquine tablets in critically ill cases

MUSCLE PAIN, DIARRHOEA ALSO RED FLAGS

Apart from loss of smell and taste, the health ministry added muscle pain, mucous formation in throat, sore throat, clogged nasal cavity, and diarrhoea to the list of Covid-19 symptoms, in a revised clinical management protocol released on Saturday. This means, those with the above symptoms could soon be considered eligible for coronavirus testing

CENTRE CHANGES STANCE ON HCQ

- The revised protocol says anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) should be used in the early stage for meaningful results and should be avoided in pa tients who are critically ill
- The new documents says the evidence base behind the use of hydroxychloroquine remains limited as with other drugs | P7

ECG

SHOULD BE DONE BEFORE A PATIENT STARTS TAKING HCQ TABLETS

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India may have to spend 6.2% of GDP to manage Covid: ICMR

Report submitted to govt recommends intensified public health surveillance measures; infections expected to peak in October-November

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

A whopping 6.2% of the country's GDP, or about ₹12.5 lakh crore, is required to fight the Covid-19 pandemic in India with intensified public measures, a report by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said.

Considering that the Union health budget is 1.3% of the GDP and the Centre has pledged ₹15,000 crore towards the public health crisis so far, this means that the cost of Covid-19 care could be nearly five times the annual allocation on health and 75 times the fund dedicated towards the disease management yet.

The report, *A Model-Based Analysis for Covid-19 Pandemic in India: Implications for Health Systems and Policy for Low- and Middle-Income Countries*, has also noted that "in the event of a lockdown for eight weeks, the peak of the epidemic shifts by 34-76 days, and the number of cases at the end of the 8-week lockdown reduces by 69% to 97% with varying effectiveness of lockdown. "However, the cumulative long-term cases remain the same," it said.

The study has been prepared by public health specialists and health economists attached to the ICMR, PGIMER-Chandigarh, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a member of the National Task Force on Covid-19.

The 25-page report, submitted to the government, also underlines that intensification of public health surveillance measures with 60% effectiveness is estimated to reduce the cases at peak and cumulative number of infections by 70% and 26.6%, respectively.

Strengthening the health system response in terms of enhanced testing, isolation of cases, treatment and contact tracing, as is being done currently, would have to be the mainstay to reduce the impact of the pandemic in terms of reduction in infected population and Covid-19 deaths in India until a vaccine becomes available, the experts said.

The lockdown factor

The report pegs the health system cost of managing Covid-19 in the absence of interventions such as the nationwide lockdown at ₹11,31,300 crore. "This is nearly 4.5% of the GDP. These estimated costs increased by 2.25 times with an intervention of eight-week lockdown and public health measures with 60% effectiveness," it says

A main highlight of the report is that without the lockdown and public health measures such as testing and contact tracing, the peak would have come in mid-July but has now been shifted to November and the total number of infections at the peak would be lower.

"The first two weeks of the lockdown were most effective in containing the spread of the disease and as per our analysis, the peak could be expected in October-November," Dr Narendra Arora, chair of the operations research group of the national Covid-19 task force, told this newspaper.

"While some modellers and scientists sitting in the US and UK were predicting doom for India in May-June, we have done much better and the main cornerstone of our Covid-19 strategy would be effective cluster management," he said, pointing out that the country was better prepared to deal with infections now than it was in March.

RECLAIMING A BEACH

Twelve tons of footwear that had washed ashore along the 200-metre stretch of Kodi beach in Kundapur, Udupi district, were cleared by an army of volunteers of the Clean Kundapur Project on seven Sundays. The volunteers also collected half a ton of glass bottles, 167 kg of plastic waste and 13 kg of electronic waste | EXPRESS REPORT: P5

India red-faced as Nepal parliament clears Bill to redraw map showing 'disputed' areas

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

THE Nepal Parliament, in a special session on Saturday, voted in favour of a constitutional amendment Bill to include disputed territories of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani in Uttarakhand in its new political map and emblem.

The Bill, introduced by Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Wednesday in the House of Representatives, or the Lower House of Nepal's Parliament, was cleared with a two-thirds majority after all 258 votes went in favour of the amendment.

The overwhelming majority was achieved after the main opposition party, the Nepali Congress, decided to back the amendment. The strength of the House of Representatives is 275.

India described the development as untenable and "violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues." The Ministry of External Affairs said: "We have already made our position clear on this matter. This artificial enlargement of claims is not based on historical facts or evidence and is not tenable. It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues."

The Bill will now be sent to the Upper House. Once cleared there, it would be sent to the Nepali President for ratification. The formal clearance of the new map is likely to close any chances of Indo-Nepal talks on the border issue.

Ladakh situation under control, troops disengaging: Army chief

VINEET UPADHYAY & MAYANK SINGH @ Dehradun/New Delhi

IN the first public statement after Indian and Chinese troops clashed in eastern Ladakh last month following which the Chinese army has occupied areas near the Pangong lake, Army Chief General M M Naravane said on Saturday that the situation was under control and both the sides were "disengaging" in a phased manner.

"We have started from the north, the area of the Galwan River. A lot of disengagement has happened. We have had a fruitful dialogue with the Chinese, it will continue and by and by, the situation will improve," Gen Naravane said.

"It started with corps commander-level talks on June 6 which has been followed up by a number of meetings at the local level between commanders of equivalent ranks and as a result of this lot disengagement has taken place," the Army chief said.

While there have been reports of minor disengagement of troops from the Galwan Valley and Hot Spring areas, there has been no change in the standoff at Finger 4 of the Pangong lake.

INDIRA CAN'TEENS? SUBSIDIES MAY GO, TENANTS MAY COME

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE State Government, which is already reeling under a fund crunch, is likely to stop funding the Indira Canteens as it has become a burden on the exchequer. Instead, it may look at renting out the premises to private agencies to run the canteens, and thereby raise additional revenues.

The Indira Canteens were started by the previous Congress government, headed by Siddaramaiah, to provide food at subsidised cost to the urban poor.

Speaking to *The New Sunday Express*, Urban Development Minister Byrathi Basavaraj said the government is spending over Rs 400 crore per year towards subsidy on the canteens. "There are allegations of fund misuse. The contractors provide bills for 500 people and collect the money from the government, whereas hardly 200-300 people may have had food. This needs to be probed," he said.

The minister pointed out that Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa had recently instructed them to get a report on the working of the Indira Canteens. "I have directed officials to get full information on the canteens and number of customers. The report is expected to be ready in a month," he said.

When asked if the government will shut the canteens, Basavaraj said there is a proposal to rent them out to private agencies. "In such a case, we will not fund it. The private agency can fix the rates," he said. P5

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

- 308 Test +ve on Saturday
- Total +ve cases on Saturday 6,824
- Total deaths 81
- 3,648 Recoveries so far

REPORTS: P4

- CM B S Yediyurappa will review the Covid-19 situation and measures taken to revive the economy on Monday, ahead of his video conference with the PM on Wednesday
- Kakati police have booked a case against eight people and arrested one among them for allegedly attacking a Panchayat Development Officer and other officials at Maranhoi village in Belagavi district

EXPRESS READ

Petrol, diesel prices hiked

New Delhi: Petrol price was on Saturday hiked by 59 paise per litre and diesel by 58 paise as oil companies, for the seventh day in a row, adjusted retail rates in line with costs since ending an 82-day hiatus in rate revision.

TPG picks 0.93 pc in Jio Platforms

New Delhi: Global alternative asset firm TPG has bought 0.93 per cent stake in billionaire Mukesh Ambani's digital arm Jio Platforms for Rs 4,546.80 crore. With this, the company has raised Rs 1.02 lakh crore from global technology investors, the company said in a statement on Saturday.

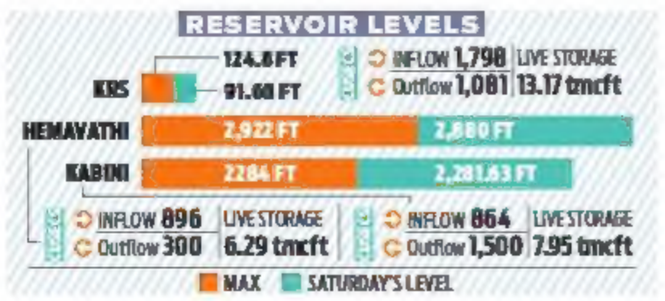
CWMA DIKTAT

Raitha wrath: More of Cauvery ordered to flow away

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

FARMERS in the Cauvery basin, who are already hit due to the closure of sugar factories, crash in prices of farm produce and delay in the release of water to save semi-arid crops, have now been dealt another blow. The Cauvery Water Management Authority has directed the state to release 40.34 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu in June and July.

Maintaining that the directive is based on the monthly quota finalised by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal in its final verdict, the Authority has asked Karnataka to release 9.19 tmcft of water for June and 31.37 tmcft for July.



This comes at a time when the availability of water in all the four Cauvery basin reservoirs combined — KRS, Harangi, Kabini and Hemavathi — is less than 32 tmcft. Any discharge from these will affect the drinking water needs of Bengaluru, Mysuru and other towns and standing crops if there are no timely showers in the catchment area.

Opposing the order as unrealistic, farmer leaders said the monsoon is yet to set in fully in Kodagu and also Wayanad in neighbouring Kerala. P5

We are not against implementing the Authority's decision... But in this time of distress, we will have to review release of water

Narayana Gowda, Mandya District Minister

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